



## ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND SETTLER ROADS IN THE WEST BANK

Settlements are residential, industrial and farming colonies built on land annexed/ occupied with the "approval and direct or indirect support of the Israeli government" (OCHA,2007).

Kfar Etzion, the first settlement, was established following the 'Six Day War' in 1967, so too the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Settlements. 42% of the West Bank is now controlled by a sphere of domination centred on the settlements.

*"Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development [... and] have been established in breach of international law."*  
International Court of Justice ruling (09/07/ 2004)

The settlements are located on the Golan Heights (territory seized by Israel from Syria during the Six Day War), East Jerusalem (Al Quds) and the West Bank. In August 2005, 17 settlements in Gaza and 4 in Northern Samaria in the West Bank were evacuated during the Israeli 'disengagement plan'. According to Peace Now, the numbers of settlers grew from 1,500 in 1972 to 243,900 in 2004. By then, Israelis comprised 9.59% (243,900) and Palestinians 90.41% (2,300,293) of the population of the West Bank.

Currently, 300,000 Israelis live in 200 settlements in the West Bank and 200,000 in the urban setting of Arab East Jerusalem. UN Resolution 242 calls for Israel's withdraw from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Golan Heights deeming these occupations illegal under international law. UN Security Council Resolution 446 (1979) stated *"that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."*

### What are settlements?

Settlements are residential, industrial and farming colonies, built on Palestinian land, and annexed/ occupied with the approval and direct or indirect support of the Israeli government. They are serviced by the Israeli state and protected by both the Israeli army and armed settlers. They are mainly located on hill tops and on elevated fertile ground and surrounded by 'security' barriers or walls. They range from Ma'ale Adumim, east of Jerusalem, which is a town of 30,000 with a shopping centre, schools, recreation centre and its own mayor, to a settlement enclave in the heart of the Palestinian city of Hebron where 800 settlers live under Israeli army protection and are openly hostile and frequently violent towards the local Palestinian community since it was established in 1967.

Ma'ale Adumim, Beitar Illit, Modi'in Illit and Ariel have been granted the municipal status of a city and their designation as 'settlement blocs' by the Israeli state identify them as centres for further population expansion. Furthermore, Ma'ale Adumim, which was started in 1976, forms part of an expanding concentric circle around Jerusalem, cutting East Jerusalem off from the West Bank and effectively dividing the West Bank in half, creating an obstacle between Bethlehem and Ramallah. Incentives offered to those relocating in settlements include a range of incentives from low house rents and mortgage repayments, grants to industry and tax breaks.

The policy of moving Israelis and Jewish people from around the world into settlements is in breach of international law. According to Convention (IV) re the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. an occupying power *"shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."*

### Water – use of a scarce resource

While water to the settlements flows freely, it is severely rationed to Palestinians living in the West Bank. According to Bt'selem<sup>1</sup>, Palestinian households receive an average of 60 litres per day (40 litres below WHO (World Health Organisation) recommends *"as the set minimum amount of water needed to meet household and urban needs..."*) while settlers receive 280 litres per day. Settlements have swimming pools and sprinkler-watered lawns while Palestinians households, businesses and farmers receive rationed supplies of water. Effluent waste material from some settlements flow untreated into land owned by Palestinians without penalty or censure.

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In addition to settlements, there are 106 outposts dotted around the West Bank, in many cases used by the Israeli State as the first stage in the establishment of new settlements.

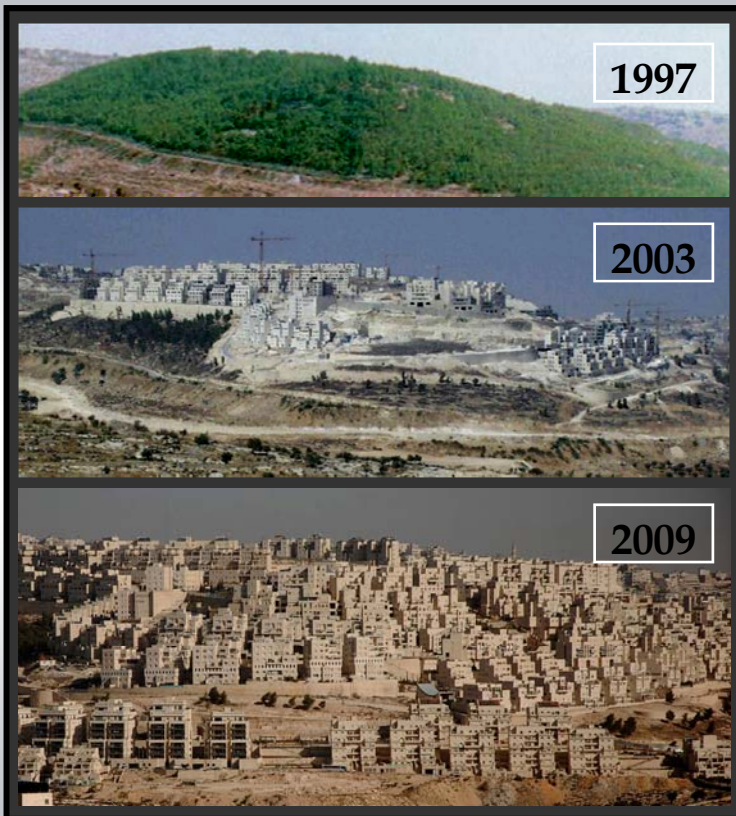
Settlers travel on 300 miles of modern motorways, bridges and 'bypass roads' (roads that bypass Palestinian towns and villages) which connect settlements and the cities and towns of Israel, while on the other hand Palestinians are confined to poor quality roads and a chequered system of 461 checkpoints and roadblocks (Abunimah 2006). This domination of the West Bank's transport infrastructure by the Israeli army/state acts as a stranglehold which severely restricts Palestinians going about their everyday business.

As part of the construction of settlements, outposts and roads, many olive trees and orchards have been destroyed. Some of the olive trees date back several hundred years and are not only a key economic resource, but represent an important symbol for Palestinians of their connection to their ancestral lands. Furthermore, the West Bank is surrounded by a Security/Apartheid Wall (See Sadaka Factsheet: The Wall). While settlers enjoy all the rights of Israeli citizenship, Palestinians live under the military rule of an occupying force and often have to contend with the violence of settlers who act with impunity under Israeli law. In 2007, B'Tselem, investigated "64 cases in which settlers assaulted Palestinians or damaged their property" (B'Tselem, 2007).

Settlements, outposts, checkpoints, roadblocks and the apartheid wall are integrated parts of the military occupation and strategy of the Israeli state to transform the demographics of the West Bank. Settlements can be understood as constituting 'facts on the ground' as permanent fixtures to be used as bargaining chips by the Israeli state in negotiations with Palestinians on a political settlement.

But, according to MIFTAH, "A viable Palestinian state is impossible to create without a full dismantlement of settlements and their population from the West Bank to the pre-1967 borders" (21/08/2009).

<sup>1</sup>B'tselem is the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, established in 1989 by a group of prominent academics, attorneys, journalists, and Knesset members.



### The growth of a settlement

Left: Jebel Abu Ghneim was an area of natural pine forest within Bethlehem Municipality which was expropriated by Israel for the construction of a settlement colony. Today this settlement is more commonly known as Har Homa. These pictures document 12 years of continuous settlement expansion.

Right: A Palestinian walks along a fence constructed to disconnect the settlement form its traditional hinterland of Bethlehem Municipality.



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**Left: Israeli troops patrol the construction site of a settlement bypass road in Dar Salah near Bethlehem. November 2005.**

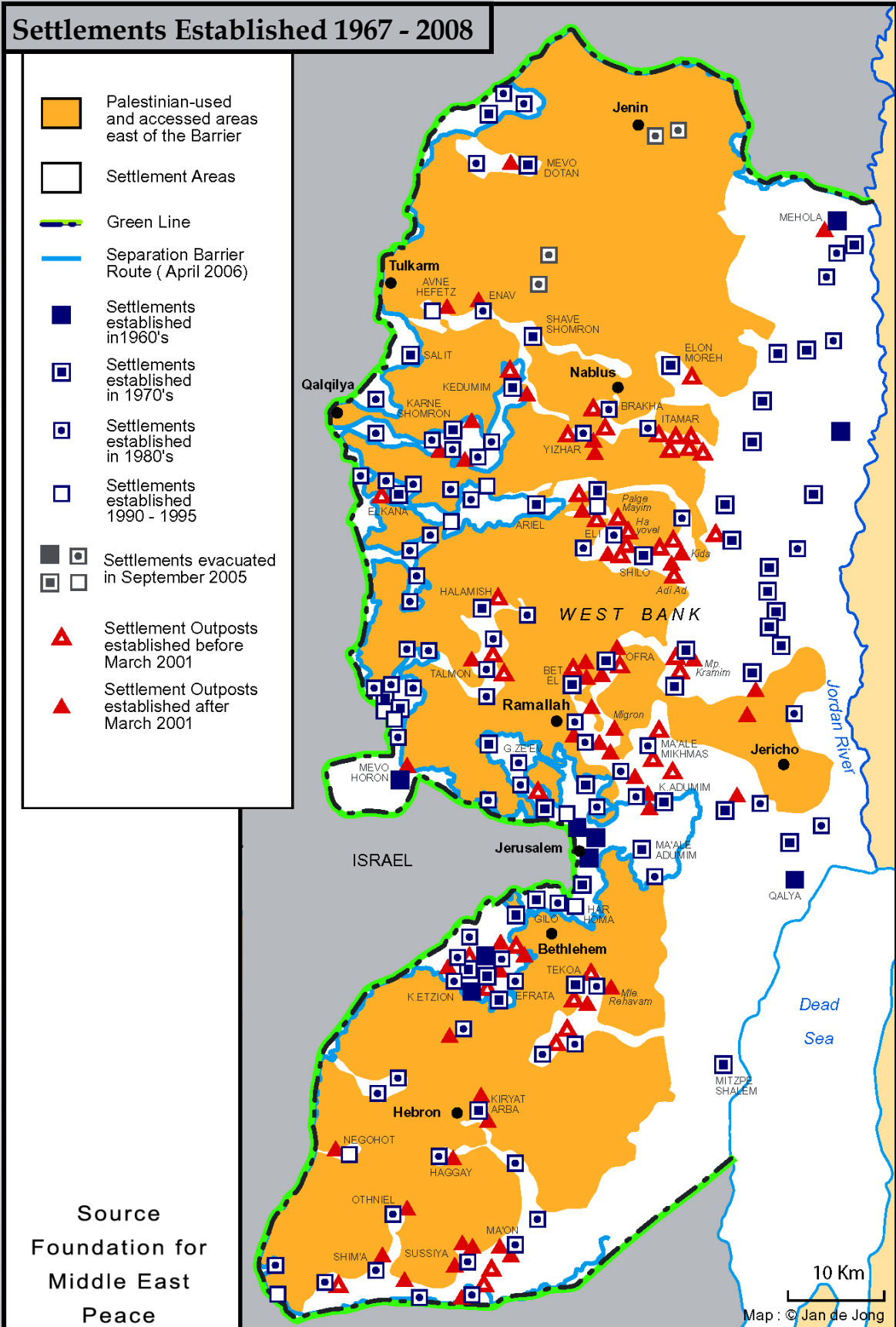
**Right: Israeli only settlement bypass road at Beit-Sahour. October 2007**



**Left: A Palestinian families rooftop water tanks pictured after they were damaged in an attack by nearby Israeli settlers, Hebron. April 15th 2009.**

**More than 90% of the cases of settler violence investigated since 2006 closed without indictment.  
UN OCHA , February 2010**

# SETTLEMENT MAP



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